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STAN LEE presents:

Until the Stars Turn Cold

--with reports that bystanders caught in the middle of the fight between Spider-Man and his opponents, one of whom has been identified as Doctor Octopus, were able to escape shortly before the hotel collapsed.

LAPD SWAT units and helicopters are searching the area looking for Doctor Octopus and the man who may either have been an accomplice or who may also have been fighting Doctor Octopus for reasons not yet known.

"We also have no information on the fate of Spider-Man, who may or may not have been able to escape the scene before the hotel collapsed.

"According to structural experts, it is unlikely that anyone inside the hotel when it collapsed could have survived..."

I can't breathe... can't breathe...

Keep moving... don't black out... if you black out you die...

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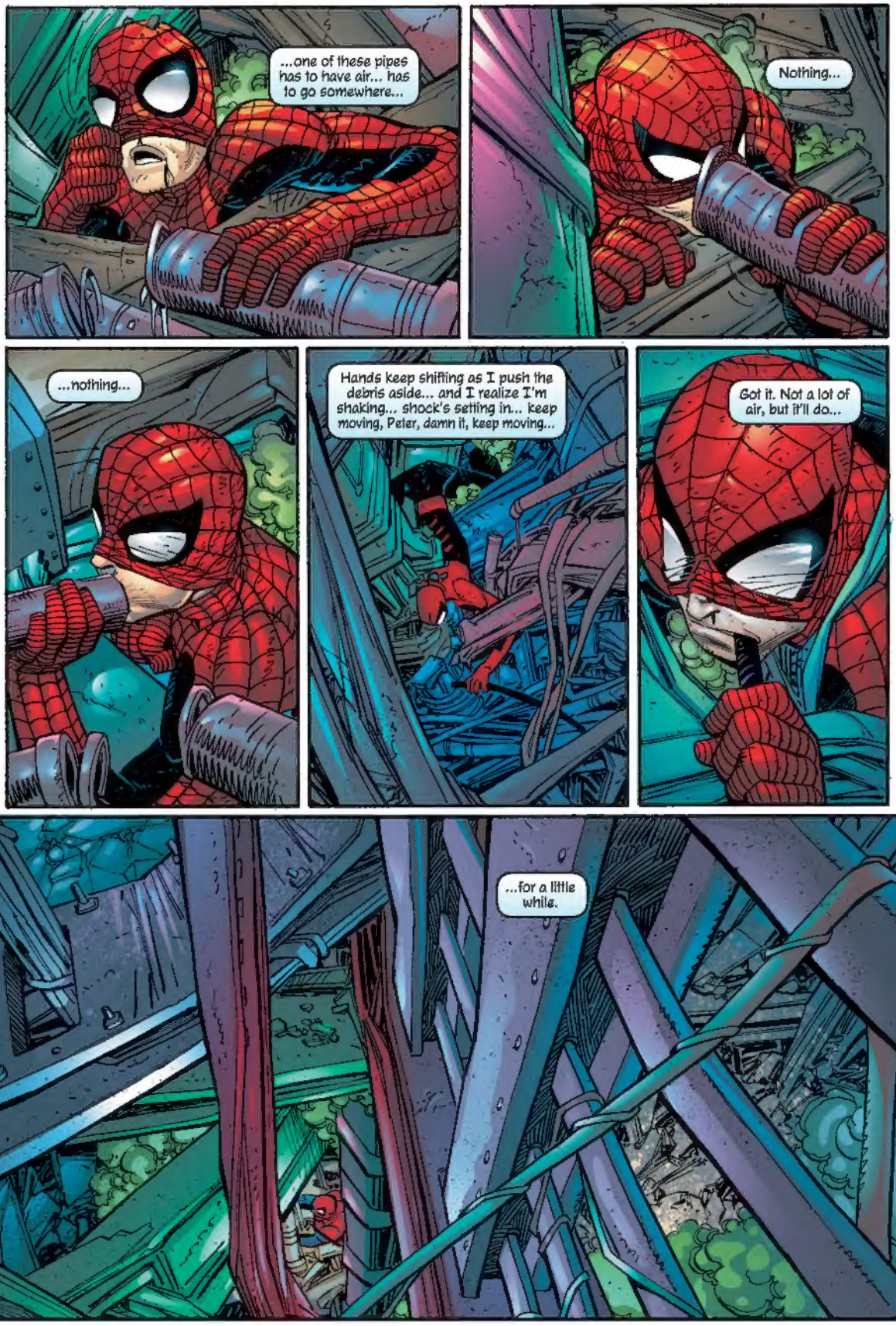
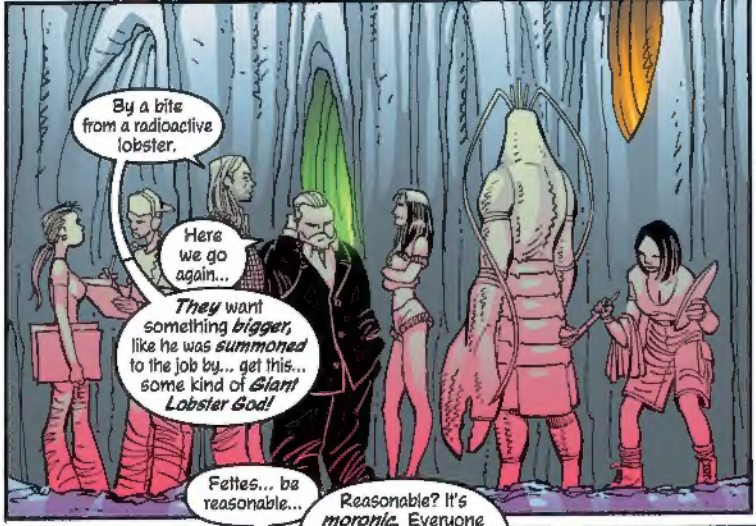
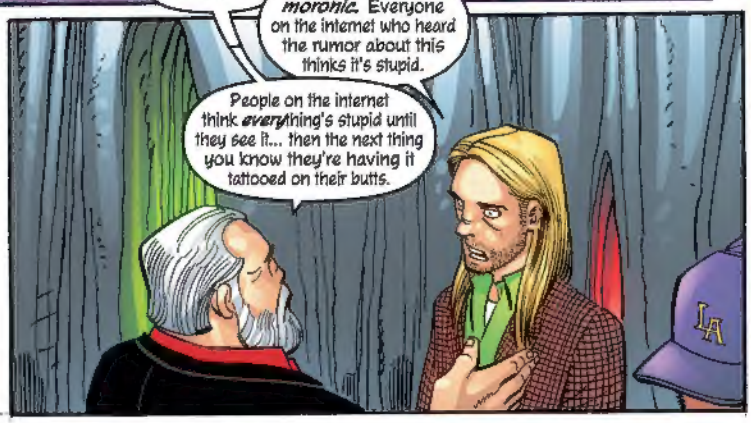
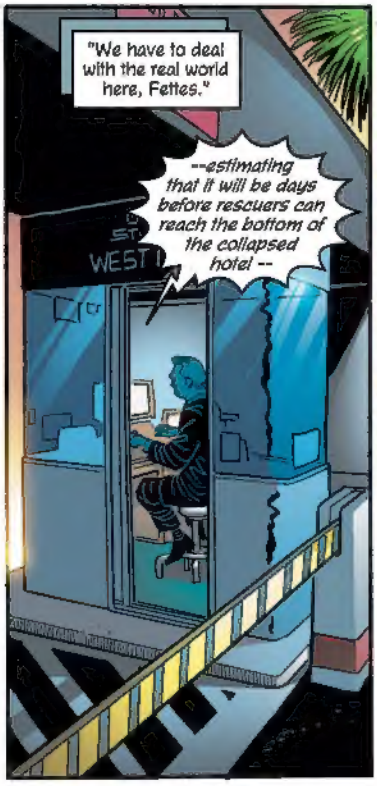

...one of these pipes has to have air... has to go somewhere...
Nothing...
...nothing...
Hands keep shifting as I push the debris aside... and I realize I'm shaking... shock's setting in... keep moving, Peter, damn it, keep moving...
Got it. Not a lot of air, but it'll do...
...for a little while.

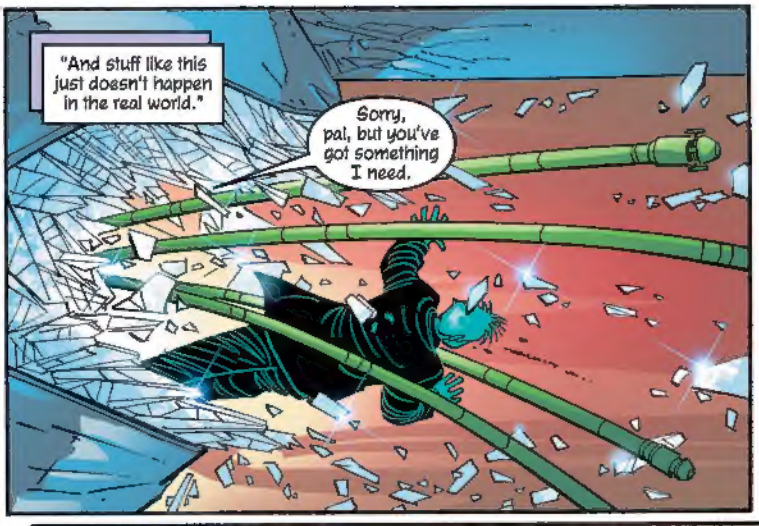
Amazing what five million dollars worth of lumber, paint and chrome can buy these days, isn't it, Al?
Yessir.
Any word from the director?
No sir. He's caught in traffic. Front gate's talking about some kind of problem up the road at the hotel --
Look, we have to get these camera tests on hair, makeup and wardrobe done in time for the studio brass to approve it before we shoot. We don't need the director for that part. Tell 'em to get out here.
Yes sir, Mister Devereaux.
We need first-team on the set.
That's why producers make the big bucks, Al. When everybody else flakes out, we get things done.
Hey, Rick, how's it going?
Fine, Mr. Devereaux. Have you lost weight? You look great.
Thanks. So Mary Jane, you've met your love interest?
Yes, I --
Great, that's great, now --
Excuse me, but I thought there was supposed to be a closed set for these tests --
It's just a skeleton crew, MJ. I promise if anyone here sees anything he hasn't seen before, I'll shoot it personally.
I understand, but --
Time's wasting, so let's get to it.
Mr. Devereaux --
Oh, crud...
What?
It's the writer, Fettes Grey. I gave the office specific instructions that he wasn't invited --
Why didn't I get a call sheet for the camera test?
I don't know... I gave my assistant specific instructions that you were to be faxed the call sheet wherever you were. I'll have her fired at once.
We have bigger problems than that. Have you seen this last batch of notes?
This isn't the best time to --
They don't like Lobster-Man's origin. They said it was stupid and improbable and not *deep* enough. What the hell does *that* mean?
How was he created?

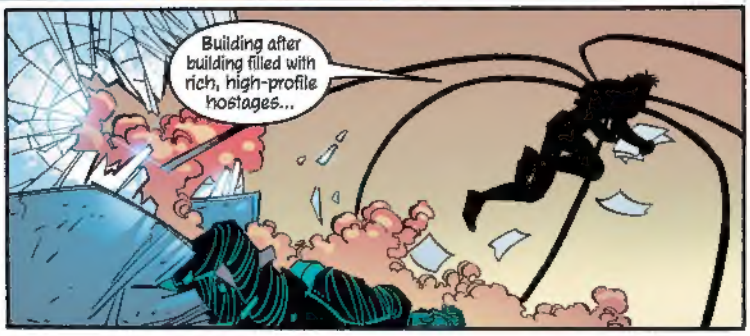

By a bite from a radioactive lobster.
Here we go again...
They want something bigger, like he was summoned to the job by... get this... some kind of Giant Lobster God!

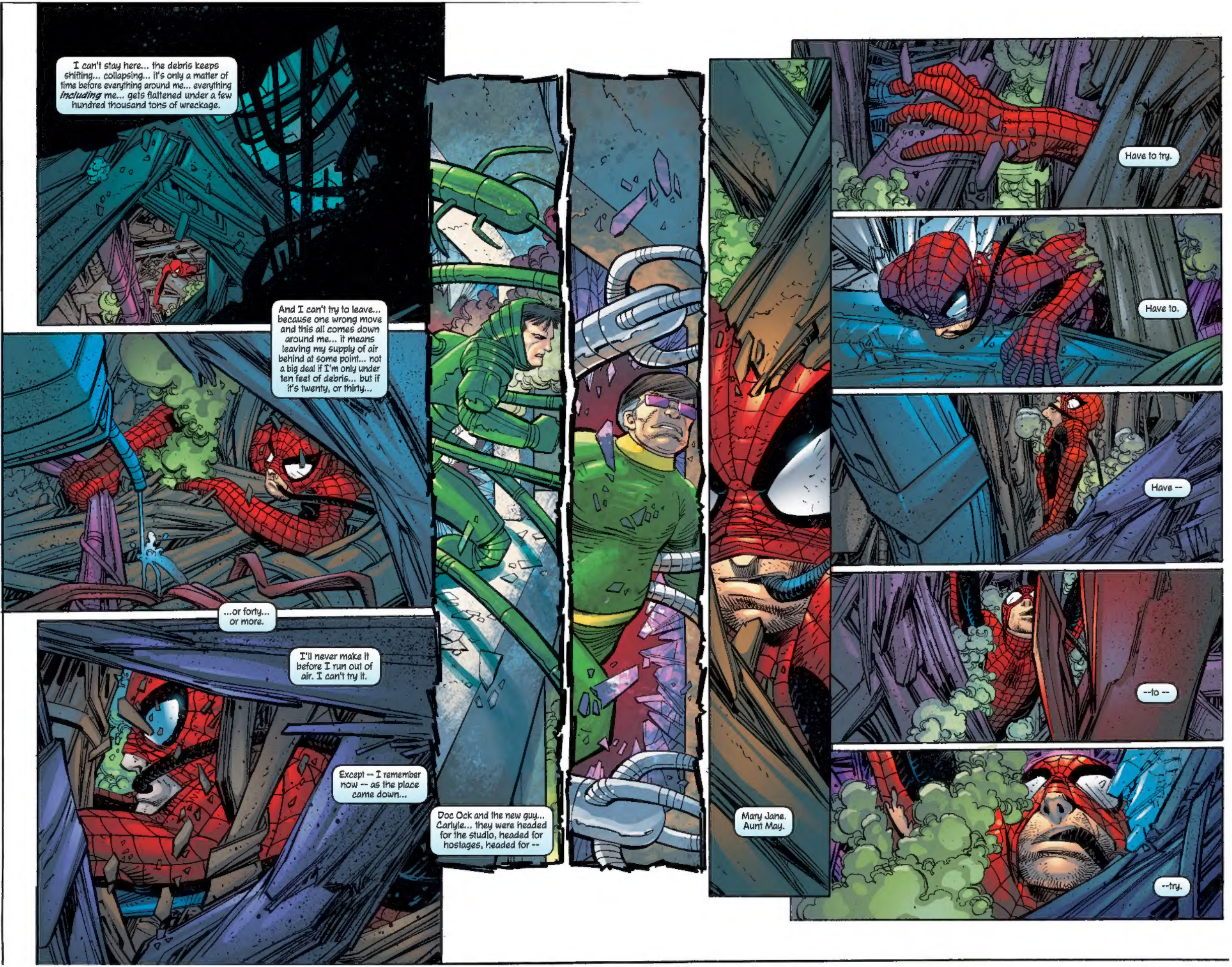

Fettes... be reasonable...
Reasonable? It's moronic. Everyone on the internet who heard the rumor about this thinks it's stupid.
People on the internet think everything's stupid until they see it... then the next thing you know they're having it tattooed on their butts.

Look, Fettes... radiation is passe. It is so last-century. We have to move on, create new myths for a new audience. Besides, if it's a Lobster God rather than a one-time-only accident we can have all kinds of sequels... Lobster-Boy and Lobster-Girl and the Evil Lobster-Man, you name it.


"We have to deal with the real world here, Fettes."
--estimating that it will be days before rescuers can reach the bottom of the collapsed hotel --
WEST


"And stuff like this just doesn't happen in the real world."
Sorry, pal, but you've got something I need.


Building after building filled with rich, high-profile hostages...

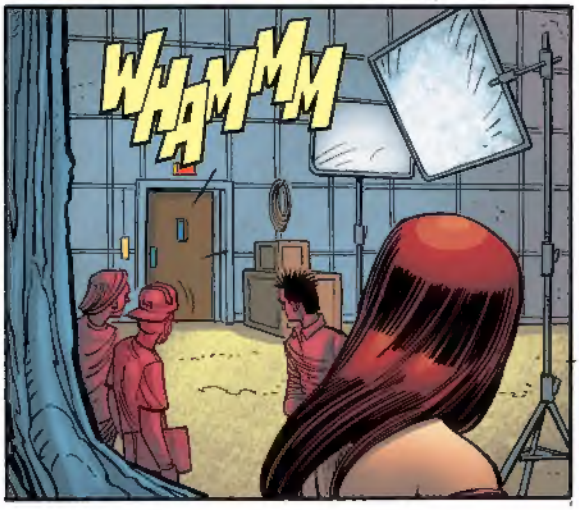

I can't stay here... the debris keeps shifting... collapsing... it's only a matter of time before everything around me... everything *including* me... gets flattened under a few hundred thousand tons of wreckage.
And I can't try to leave... because one wrong move and this all comes down around me... it means leaving my supply of air behind at some point... not a big deal if I'm only under ten feet of debris... but if it's twenty, or thirty...
...or forty... or more.
I'll never make it before I run out of air. I can't try it.
Except -- I remember now -- as the place came down...
Doc Ock and the new guy... Carlyle... they were headed for the studio, headed for hostages, headed for --
Mary Jane. Aunt May.
Have to try.
Have to.
Have --
--to --
--try.

STAGE 7

Mary Jane...?
Excuse me, ma'am, but you're going to have to leave... the tour's that way, it --
No, it's all right, she's with me.

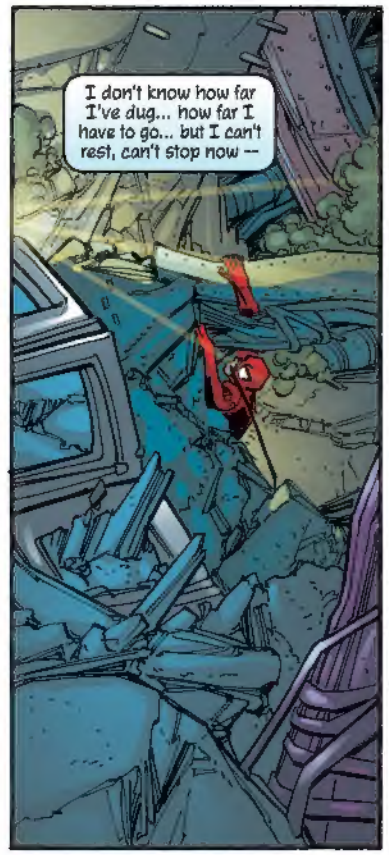
Is everything all right?
Yes... well, no, that is... Peter had to go.
Oh. Well, I suppose I should have expected --
No. I mean he... had to *go*.

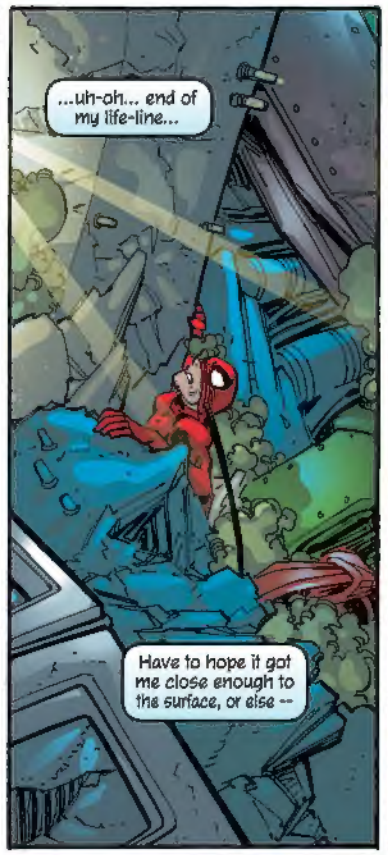
...itsy-bitsy spider went up the water-spout...
Got it.
There's some kind of trouble up the hill --


WHAMMM

WHAMMM

Well... just what I was looking for. A perfect cross-section of hostages and potential casualties. All we need now is a teamster with a truck and --
--and --
Tell me that... *you*... aren't really what you look like, are you?
I...
No. It's just wardrobe.
Good.
Ooff!
Rick!
"Such a relief. I was afraid that entrance requirements in the hero community had hit an all-time low."

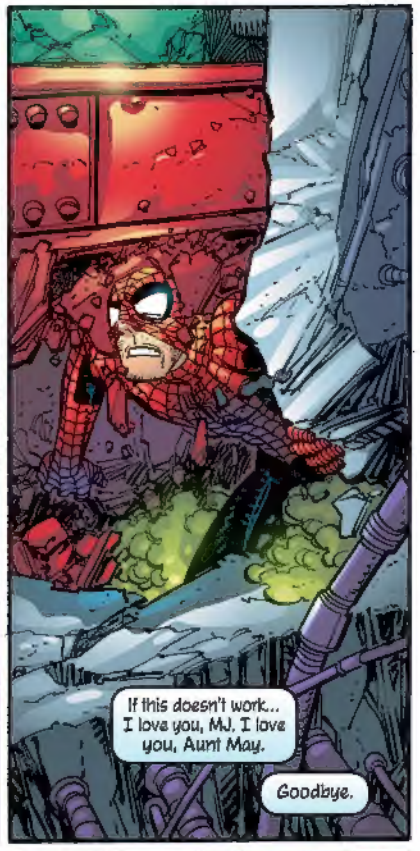

I don't know how far I've dug... how far I have to go... but I can't rest, can't stop now --


...uh-oh... end of my life-line...
Have to hope it got me close enough to the surface, or else --

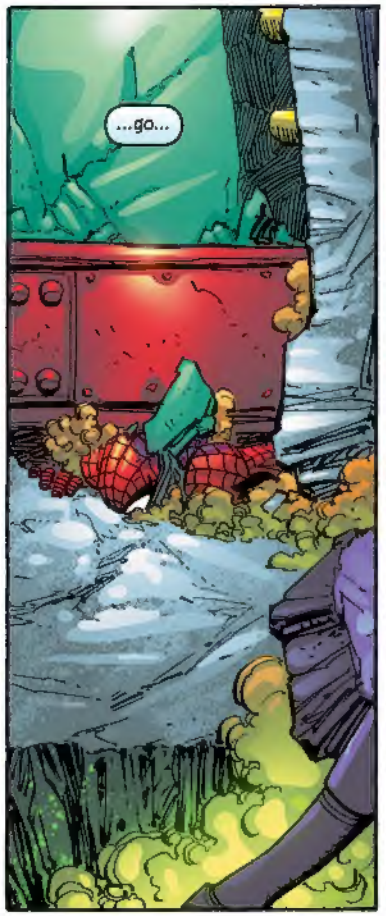
No. Don't think about that part. Think about May. And MJ.
One last, deep breath.
And... *go.*

Can't breathe... can't stop... can't breathe... can't stop...

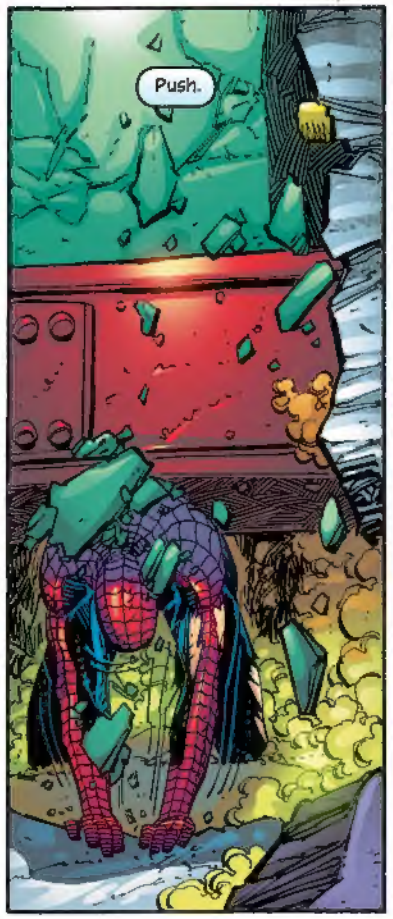
One last push. One last...


If this doesn't work... I love you, MJ. I love you, Aunt May.
Goodbye.

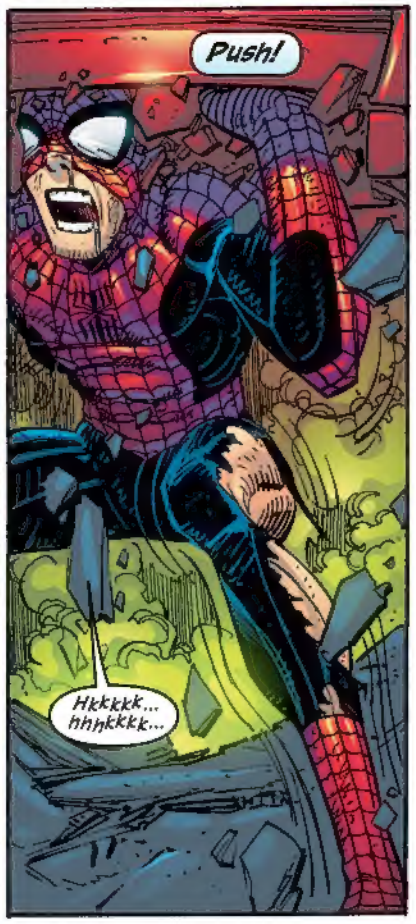
Go.


...go...

...god...
...lungs on fire... keep going... come on, damn you, Peter, keep going.


Push.

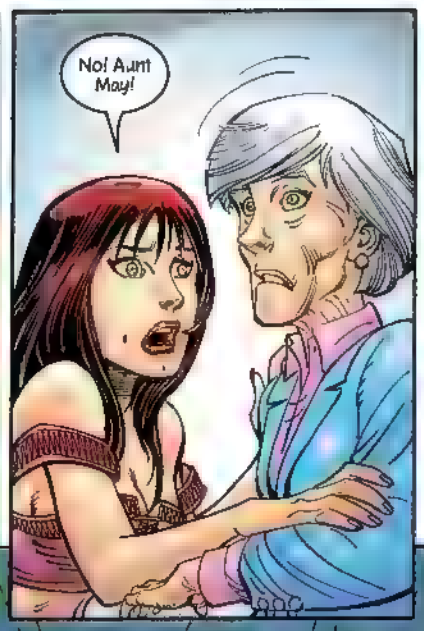
Push.
Damn you... don't you dare give up... not now... when they need you... *push! Come on, Peter! Push! Push!*

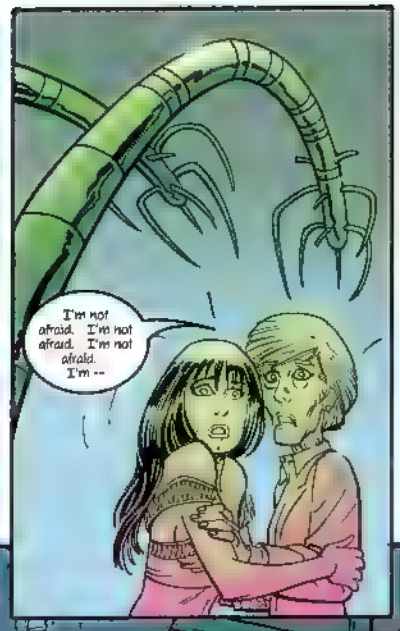

Push!
Hkkkkk... hhhkkkk...

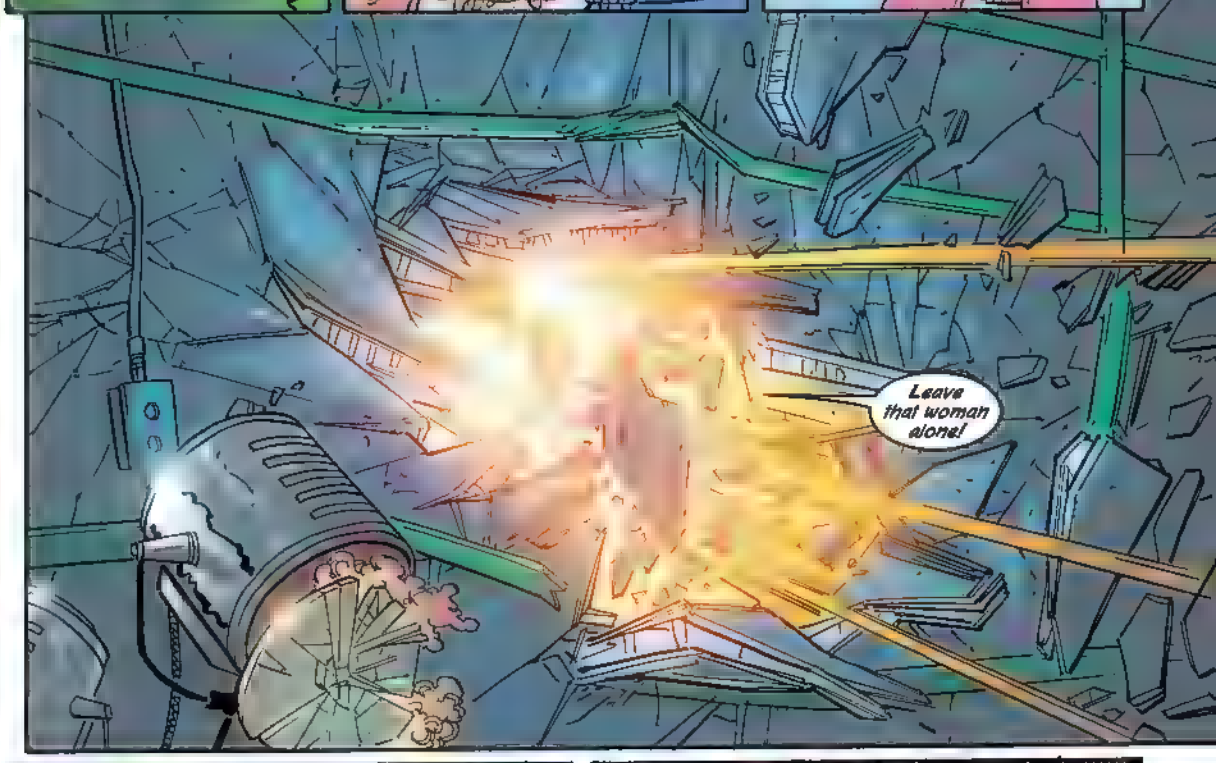
Hey... you hear something?
Whoa!
Uhnh! What the --
...dude...
Not today.
Not today...

Look, whoever you are, if you're smart you'll take a hike and get away while you still can.
While I still *can*? Are *you* threatening *me*... in *that*?
If you harm us, there's no way on earth you're getting out of here in one piece. The LAPD has a policy: they don't negotiate over hostages. No one will.
Well, now, let's not be hasty.
Look, I don't know what this is all about, but I'm sure we can come to a reasonable compromise. This studio has considerable influence with the city, and I'm a person of some importance myself, so you just tell me what you want and --
What I want?
I want a fast car out of here, no pursuit, and no interference from *anyone*. But I know they won't take me seriously, no one ever does.
Until someone dies.
So I have to make them understand just how serious I am.
But to show I'm not completely heartless, I should pick someone... expendable. Someone who's already had a good, long life.
So, ma'am, let me ask you a question.

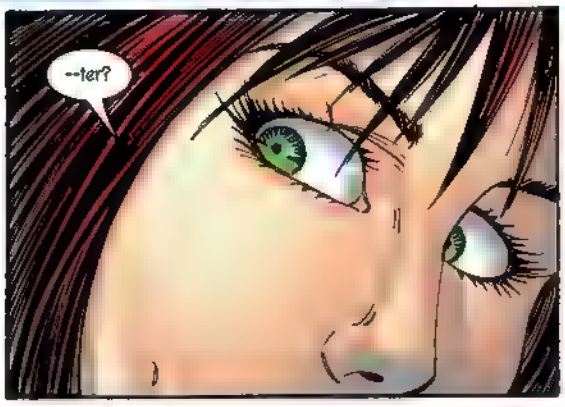
Have you put your affairs in order?


No! Aunt May!


I'm not afraid. I'm not afraid. I'm not afraid. I'm --


Leave that woman alone!

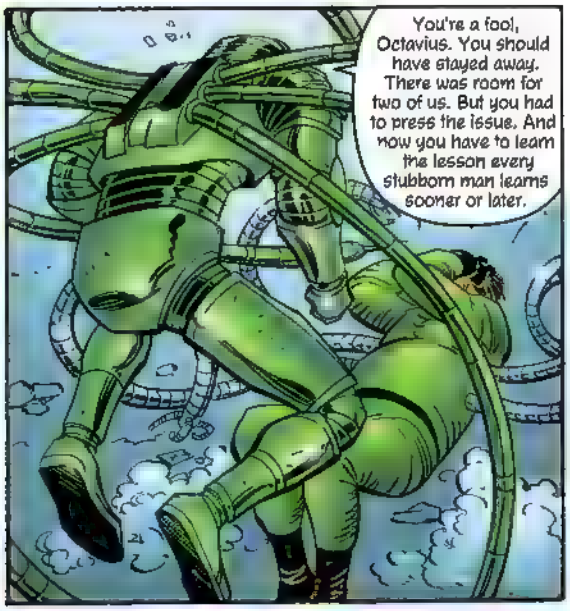
Thank God... Pe --

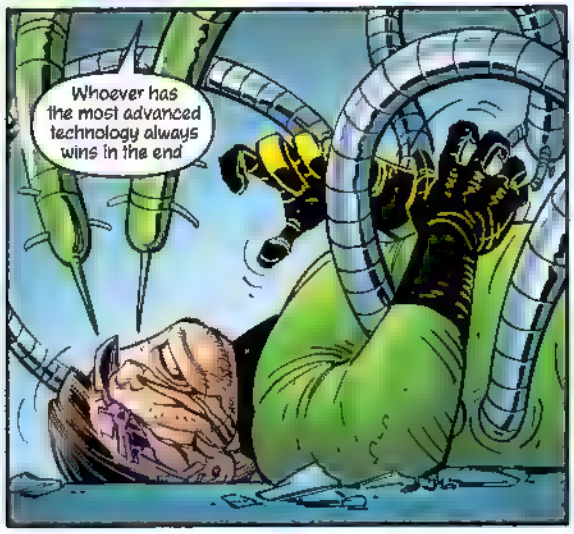

--ter?

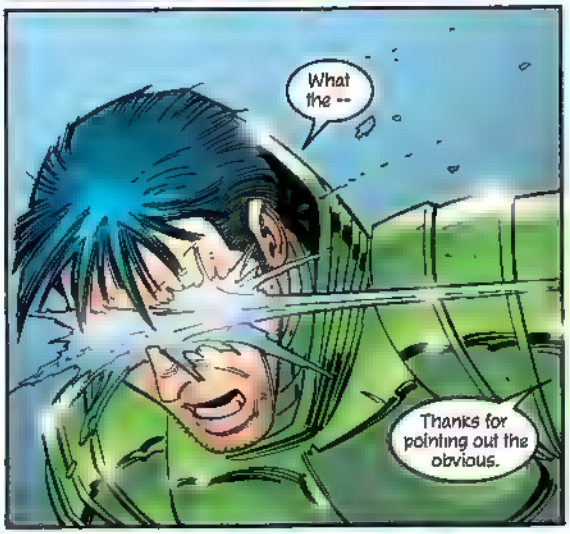
I want *no* distractions! If you think for a *minute* you're going to get away with my technology, you're --
Otto?
May?
Otto...? Otto Octavius?
"Brad! Janet! Doctor Scott!"
You just don't know when to give up, do you?

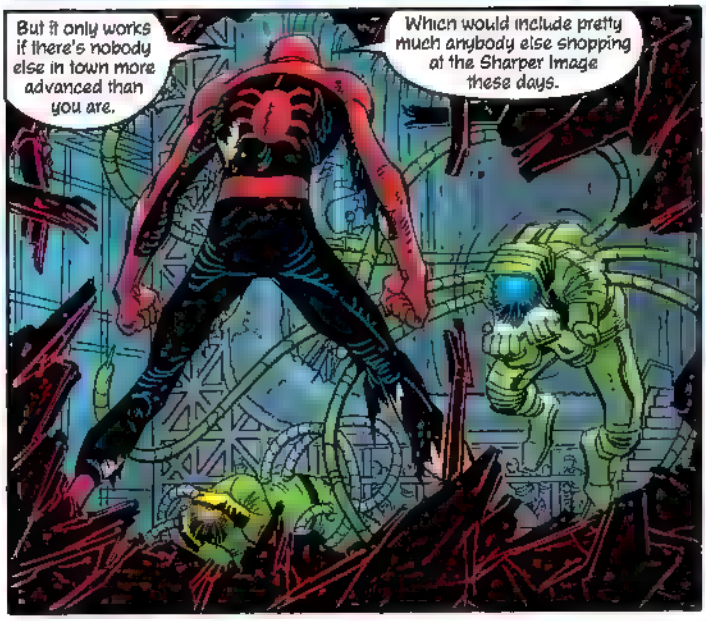
Never!
--ungh!
All right... enough's enough.
Die, old man.
DIE!

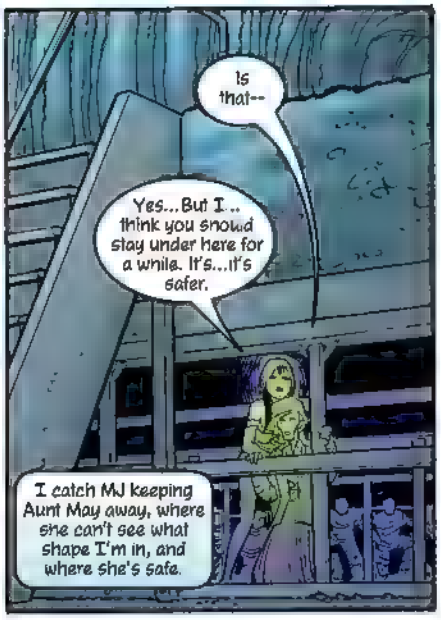
Agh!


You're a fool, Octavius. You should have stayed away. There was room for two of us. But you had to press the issue. And now you have to learn the lesson every stubborn man learns sooner or later.

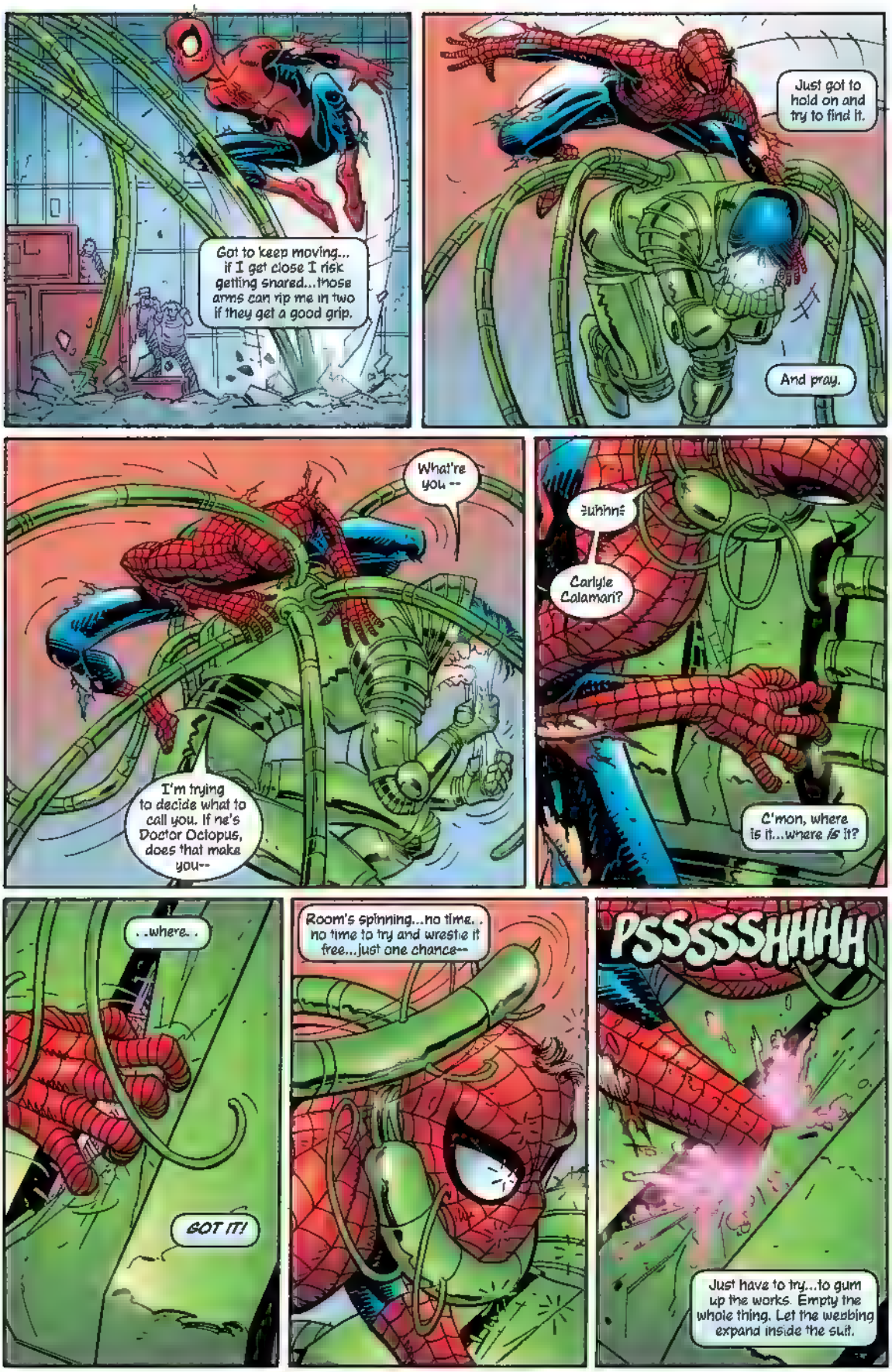

Whoever has the most advanced technology always wins in the end

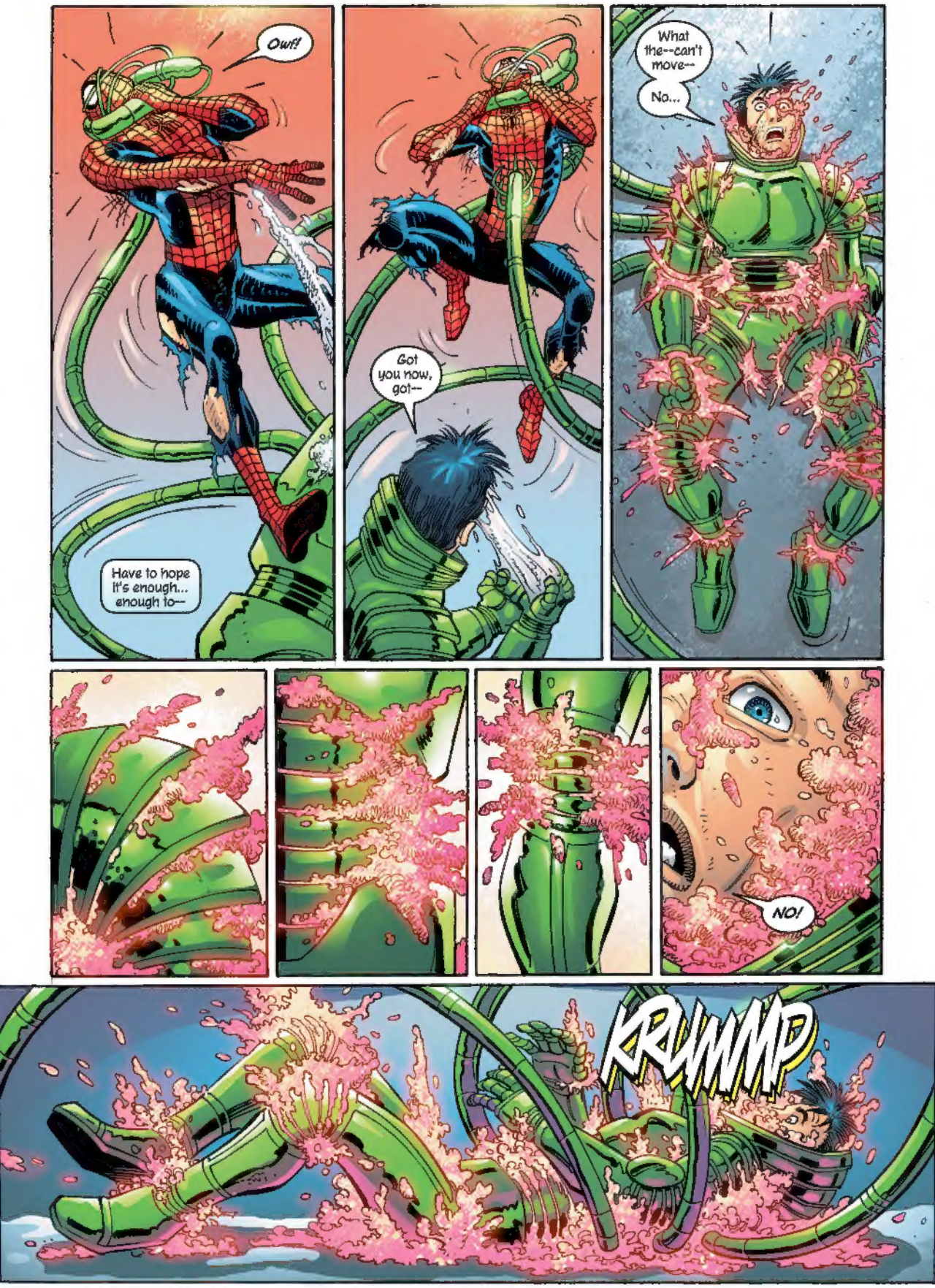

What the --
Thanks for pointing out the obvious.


But it only works if there's nobody else in town more advanced than you are.
Which would include pretty much anybody else shopping at the Sharper Image these days.


Is that--
Yes...But I... think you should stay under here for a while. It's...it's safer.
I catch MJ keeping Aunt May away, where she can't see what shape I'm in, and where she's safe.

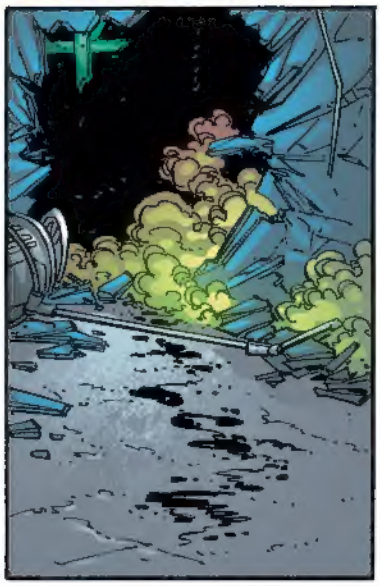
Which is all I need to know.
Just got to hit and run, wear him out. For as strong as that suit is, it's still a normal man inside.
Hit and run and stay clear of those --
--arms--
OOF!
I think he cracked a rib.
Can't let that slow me down... can't.
...his shell...
What?
..I made a small crack... just behind...
...maybe you can still take him out.
You're helping *me?*
No... I'm hurting *him.*


Got to keep moving... if I get close I risk getting snared...those arms can rip me in two if they get a good grip.
Just got to hold on and try to find it.
And pray.
What're you --
I'm trying to decide what to call you. If he's Doctor Octopus, does that make you--
Uhhh?
Carlyle Calamari?
C'mon, where is it...where *is* it?
..where..
GOT IT!
Room's spinning...no time.. no time to try and wrestle it free...just one chance--
PSSSSSHHHH
Just have to try...to gum up the works. Empty the whole thing. Let the webbing expand inside the suit.


Ow!!
Have to hope it's enough... enough to--
Got you now, got--
What the--can't move--
No...
NO!
KRUMMP

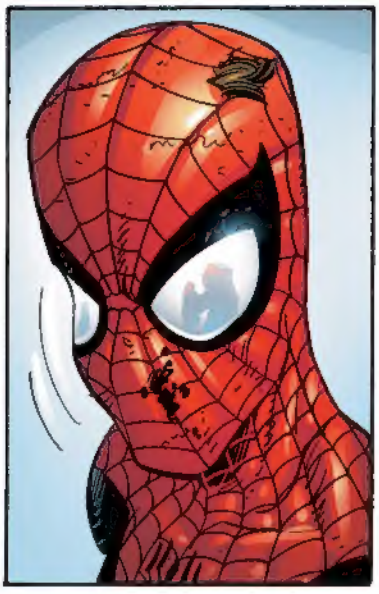
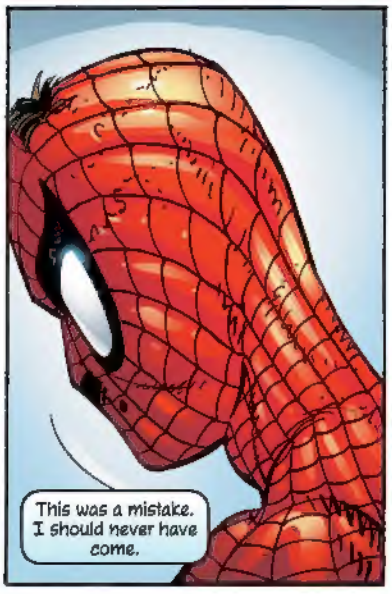
Is it--
And he's--
Yep. It's okay, Aunt May. We're safe now.
I think he's fine.

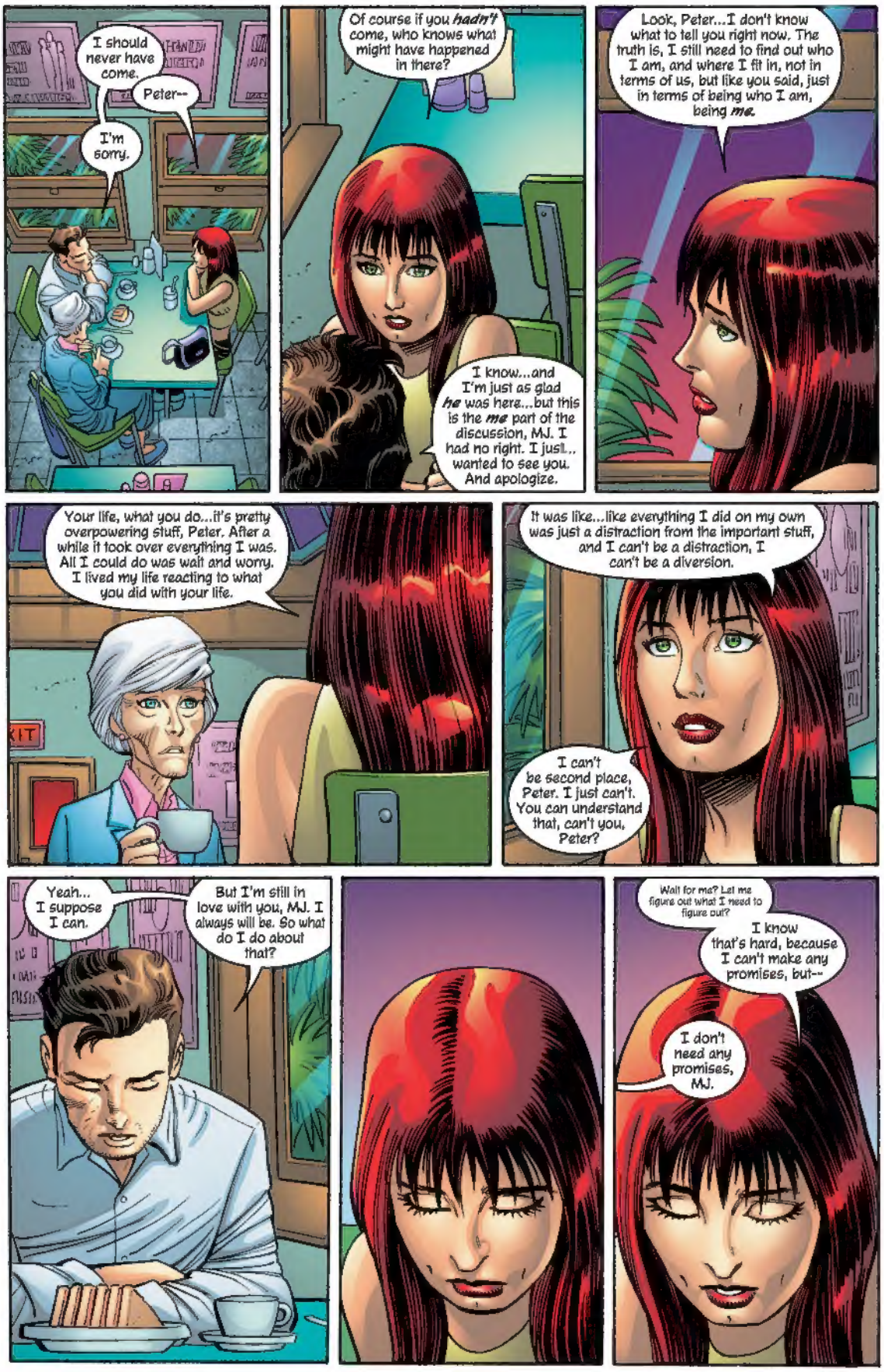
Never thought I'd owe you one, Doc, and I know you did it just to save your own ass, but even so, I--

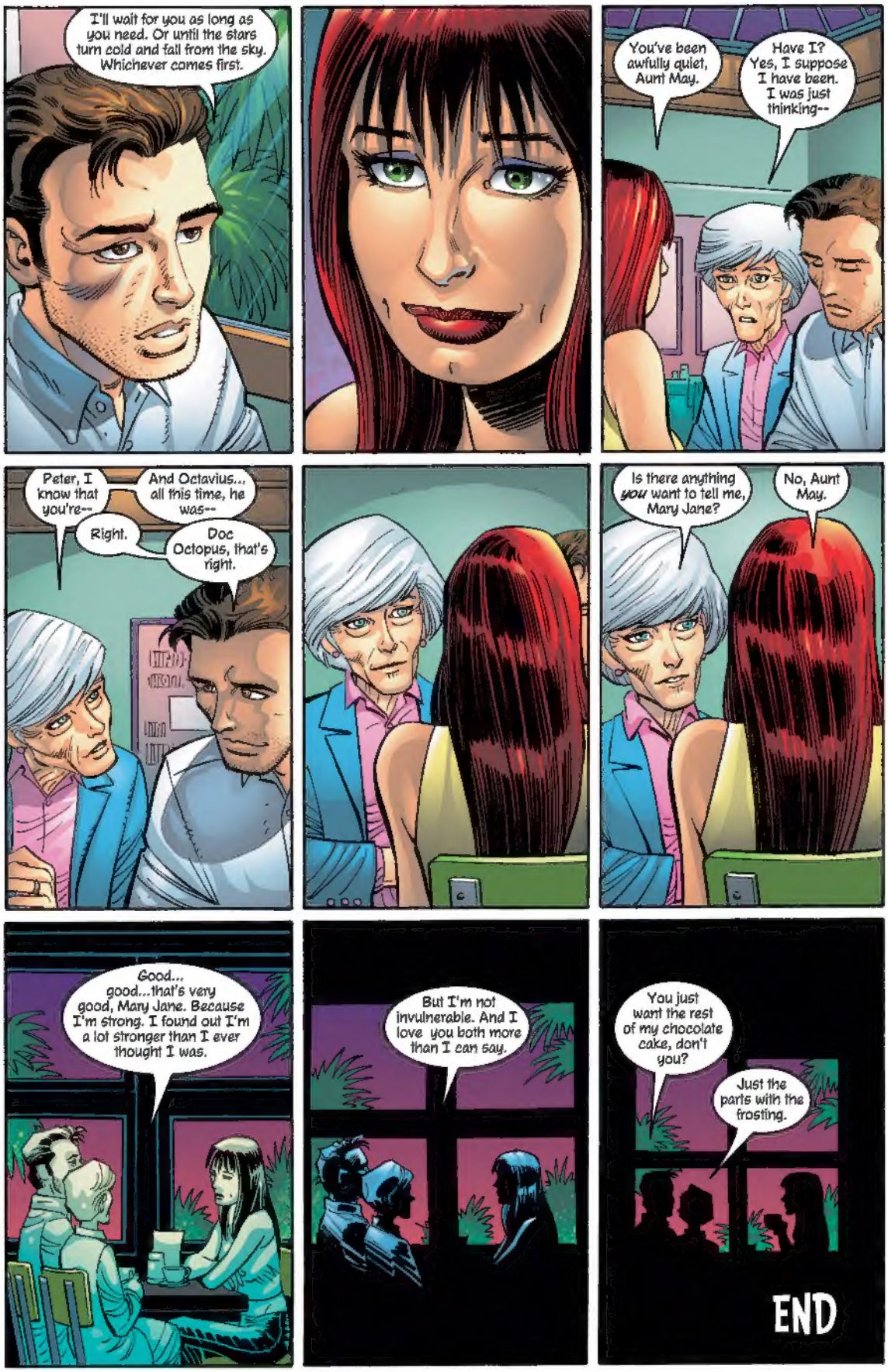
Damn.


Rick! Are you okay?
Yeah, I... I think so...
Here, let me help you.

So where's the brass--

--band...


This was a mistake. I should never have come.


I should never have come.
Peter--
I'm sorry.
Of course if you *hadn't* come, who knows what might have happened in there?
I know...and I'm just as glad *he* was here...but this is the *me* part of the discussion, MJ. I had no right. I just... wanted to see you. And apologize.
Look, Peter...I don't know what to tell you right now. The truth is, I still need to find out who I am, and where I fit in, not in terms of us, but like you said, just in terms of being who I am, being *me*.
Your life, what you do...it's pretty overpowering stuff, Peter. After a while it took over everything I was. All I could do was wait and worry. I lived my life reacting to what you did with your life.
It was like...like everything I did on my own was just a distraction from the important stuff, and I can't be a distraction, I can't be a diversion.
I can't be second place, Peter. I just can't. You can understand that, can't you, Peter?
Yeah... I suppose I can.
But I'm still in love with you, MJ. I always will be. So what do I do about that?
Wait for me? Let me figure out what I need to figure out?
I know that's hard, because I can't make any promises, but--
I don't need any promises, MJ.


I'll wait for you as long as you need. Or until the stars turn cold and fall from the sky. Whichever comes first.
You've been awfully quiet, Aunt May.
Have I? Yes, I suppose I have been. I was just thinking--
Peter, I know that you're--
And Octavius... all this time, he was--
Right.
Doc Octopus, that's right.
Is there anything *you* want to tell me, Mary Jane?
No, Aunt May.
Good... good...that's very good, Mary Jane. Because I'm strong. I found out I'm a lot stronger than I ever thought I was.
But I'm not invulnerable. And I love you both more than I can say.
You just want the rest of my chocolate cake, don't you?
Just the parts with the frosting.
END